



President's message: Happenings/upcoming events

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By Tomas Rossant, AIA

AIANY's 2015 "Dialogues from the Edge of Practice" series continues with roundtable conversations on the city's design and policy priorities and contemporary advances in the practice of architecture and corresponding public forums. Each theme is a way in which architects are broadening the scope of practice and bringing their unique problem solving skills to issues previously considered outside their purview. The discussions highlight the need for citizen architects, or those who participate in civic dialogues of citywide importance and engage policy makers on issues that matter to architects and the general public alike.

The April think tank discussion, the fourth in the series, focused on advances in micro units, live/work spaces, and the future of urban dwellings. In order to achieve mayor de Blasio's affordable housing goals, architects and city agencies must work together to contain construction costs and time. Through the development of microunits and live/work communities, we can build more units on a single site and support the creative economy in all five-boroughs. These approaches could also serve the growing senior population. Participants evaluated the role of design, zoning, and codes in order to make this a reality.

On April 17th, the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) came to the Center for Architecture to present their broad plans for zoning in New York City. DCP's Housing New York: Zoning for Quality and Affordability proposes removing obsolete provisions and modernizing others to encourage development of new high-quality, mixed-income housing. Architects then had the opportunity to discuss what the changes would mean for their practice in New York City.

AIANY also had the opportunity to take part in a focus group, hosted by DCP, about their internal processes. The Department is focused on streamlining the procedures necessary for approval. Architects, along with developers, fellow city agencies, and other industry professionals are encouraged to partake in this ongoing conversation about how DCP can serve its customers more efficiently and improve the built environment.

AIANY continues to examine solutions to New York City's most relevant urban design challenges while considering ways in which the practice of architecture must adapt in hopes of informing the de Blasio administration and influencing change citywide. To this end, we have started our national search for a new executive director. AIANY and the Center for Architecture have formed an executive director search committee and hired Phillips Oppenheim, an executive search firm for non-profit organizations, to lead the recruitment process and identify a candidate. By early next year, we hope to have found a new leader with a strategic vision for deepening our positive impact on New York City's built environment.

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